

## **Steve Harrington's Secret by MyLungsHaveGoodIntentions**

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**Summary:**

Steves life from his summer into sophomore year until after Star Court Mall.

## **Steve Harrington's Secret**

It was the start of summer, 1980. Steve's summer leading into sophomore year. He was fifteen years old and to say he was ready to start his break was an understatement. The last week of school had been full of students talking about who was holding what party to celebrate their misery coming to a temporary end. Steve was invited to every single one. Starting summer out with a bang was what he was all about, especially with Tommy by his side.

Coming home to find out his parents were sending him away for the first month of summer... Well it wasn't a part of the original plans.

"Why?" He asked looking through the brochure he was handed.

"Steven, it's not like it's some summer camp." His mother looked at him questioningly. "It's a cruise."

"Okay? But why do I have to go?" He questioned looking up at his parents.

"Honey am I missing something?" His father asked his mother as if ignoring the question. "We offer our son a luxury trip and instead of being grateful he asks us why?"

"I have plans for this summer."

"Well you'll still have time when you get home, Honey." His Mother reassured with a smile.

"All you did was drink last summer with them hooligans." His father scoffed. "A month away from Hawkins will do you good. Especially since we'll be out of town."

And even with the arguments, because let's be real, Steve tried his best not to be shipped off for a month, Steve ended up packed and ready by the end of the day for his trip tomorrow.

His first day was ok. It was a cruise for people ages 13-17 only. A supervised teen cruise. He had to take a fricken plane to get here. His roommate Andrew seemed nice. He was the same age as Steve and

mentioned he was from Florida, the state the cruise had departed from. He was maybe an inch taller than Steve, broad shoulders and a tan that his short blond hair complimented nicely. He was hoping he wouldn't be a douche bag.

The rooms were a decent size with two queen beds and a private bathroom. There was a little seating area and a mini fridge for convince. His parents definitely payed a pretty penny.

The rest of the week flew by. After Andrew and him discovered they had the same taste in music their friendship quickly blossomed. During the day they hung by the pool and did other activities the boat had to offer. At night they'd explore areas of the ship they weren't supposed to enter and smoked the pot Andrew was able to smuggle on. When they went back to their room they would talk about whatever topics came up and listen to music until they were ready to turn in for the night. Steve determined the trip wouldn't be so bad.

During week 2 on Wednesday night and yes, Steve felt dumb for remembering the day of the week, Andrew kissed him. Now Steve was popular so duh he had kissed plenty of girls before but NONE of them had sent the chills up his body that he felt in that moment. It wasn't even a hot kiss for crying out loud. It was fast and innocent and soft and perfect and it left Steve confused.

Andrew apologized immediately.

Steve said not to worry about it.

Both of them tried to hide their blush.

It wasn't until Friday that yet another incident happened. It was a day of sitting by the pool and talking about their families. Steve didn't really get to share too much with his friends back home in fear they'd treat him differently. It was stupid but he had a reputation to uphold. People looked up to him for whatever reason. It wasn't his fault his parents were so absent and he was so alone. It was easy to tell Andrew all of this because he knew in a couple weeks they would probably never see each other again. This thought scared him at the same time but he tried to ignore that.

Andrew opened up to Steve about his home life as well. He had a loving father and mother who were both very attentive. They expected a lot of him and he didn't want to fail them, nor was he. He had a girlfriend, Kelsey, which was news to Steve. She was a cheerleader with a bright future. Made sense since Andrew was already a promising baseball player, even at just 15 years old. Apparently he wow'd the coaches his freshman year. Steve had to admit he was jealous in that moment. Not just at the fact Andrew seemed to have the perfect life, but because he had a girlfriend.

That night is when he realized Andrew was living a lie. They were both seated on Andrews bed listening to music. It was something they did every night past curfew before they slept. They were talking as they usually did too but the vibe was different; something was off.

"Everything alright?" Steve asked looking through the tapes they had spread out on the bed. When there was no answer, Steve looked up only to see Andrew already staring at him deep in thought. "Andrew?" Steve asked lowly, brows furrowed. He wondered what was going on with him until— it happened again. Andrews lips were on his.

Steves body reacted the same as the first time. His breath hitched at first causing Andrew to pull back immediately. He looked completely shocked at what he just did. He opened his mouth to say something, probably to apologize, and without even thinking Steve grabbed him by the back of the neck and pulled their lips back together.

Not all the tapes stayed put as Steve pushed Andrew backwards onto the bed. The kiss deepened and everything felt amazing, but as soon as Andrew let out a light moan after Steve switched to kissing his neck, Steve pulled away.

"Whats wrong?" Andrew asked propping himself up on his elbows.

And honestly... Steve wasn't even sure. When Andrew moaned it somehow brought Steve back to reality that he was making out with a dude. It freaked him out for a second. For a moment he thought about all the girls he made out with this year at parties. He had a girlfriend first semester and he made out with her all the time. Did any of those times ever feel like this? Steve settled on saying "You

have a girlfriend.”

He regretted saying it right after because it was obvious Andrew looked like he wanted to cry. They sat in silence for a few minutes before Andrew confessed to Steve that he was gay. He always knew he was. He felt so much pressure from his parents to be perfect that he felt he'd never be able to be his true self without disappointing them. Steve new exactly how feeling like a screwup felt.

“How did you know you were gay?” Steve ended up asking as he changed into pajamas. They had put away all the tapes already and decided to call it a night.

“How could I not? I just dont find girls attractive.” Andrew responded throwing a ball into the air and catching it as he lay in bed. “Its like.. I never noticed girls but I noticed guys. Didn’t realize what it meant until I realized all my friends had the same thing going on but, ya know, reversed.”

Steve nodded like he understood. He didn’t take notice to if Andrew noticed or not.

“What about you?” Andrew asked as he continued to throw and catch the ball.

“What about me?” Steve asked closing his drawer and turning to face him.

Andrew stopped throwing the ball and looked at Steve. “I just mean... You kissed me so you’re gay too, right?” He said it like it was an obvious fact.

“That isn’t what that means?” Steve tried to state but it sounded more like a question. He guessed it kind of was a question but he didn’t want Andrew to know that. He was hoping he couldn’t tell it came out that way.

“You said that like you aren’t sure yourself.” Andrew smiled as he once again started playing catch with himself. Steve walked over and caught the ball in mid air without saying anything. He put it on the dresser next to the other boys bed before turning off the light and

climbing into his own bed.

The room was silent for who knows how long? Probably a few minutes but it felt like forever.

“How long have you and Kelsey been together?” He didn’t know why he asked.

“Since middle school.” Andrew admitted. “I’m probably going to have to end things with her next summer.”

“Why next summer?”

“We’ll be 16.” Andrew said like it was obvious, but he still sounded sad. “People are going to expect us to start talking about sex since we’ll probably be one of the longest dating couples.”

“You don’t plan on faking that with her like you do the rest of the relationship?” Why the hell was he being so mean.

“Steve, I don’t even know if I could get hard for a girl if I wanted to.” He almost laughed as he said it like he still couldn’t believe it himself. “I guess I’m just gonna be bouncing around relationships until I can use age as an excuse for not dating. Or until my parents die.” There was a pause. “Who knows maybe I’ll die a virgin.”

“Do you really think your parents would respond that badly to you being gay?”

Andrew didn’t answer again. It was the same silence it was earlier when Steve seen him trying to fight his emotions. He got out of his own bed and walked over to Andrews. “Move over” He said and Andrew obliged. Steve held him in his arms all night.

Over the next two weeks the boys grew closer. It was the first time Steve felt like he could be his true self around anyone. When the trip came to an end, the boys said their goodbyes and Steve watched as Andrews parents and girlfriend greeted him. He could see the look in his face just before that screamed he didn’t want to get off the boat. Steve thought about him the whole plane ride back to Hawkins. He was going to miss him more than he knew at this moment, and in this moment all he could think about was how bad he felt that Andrew

had to return to his double life. At least Steve knew he would no longer be able to joke about dying a virgin.

When he got back to Hawkins he slipped back into routine like he never left. Tommy informed him of everything he missed the last month, and Steve told Tommy about this girl he met on the cruise. He got a slap on the back from many people at the party that night as Tommy obviously told everyone he lost his V card on his vacation. He doesn't know where Tommy heard "Big breasted junior who he gave it to multiple times" from since Steve knew for a fact he never said that. Hell, he never even mentioned a name. That was the story sweeping the party though, and it earned him the nickname King Steve.

That nickname stuck with him until JR year, and if Steve wasn't a ladies man before the nickname, he sure as hell was now. All the girls wanted him, and he gave the girls the attention they desired. He just found it odd he didn't actually care that they wanted him. Instead he found himself now noticing the boys.

When he met Nancy, he was surprised a smart pretty girl like her would give him the time of day. Usually people with half a brain thought Steve was a jerk and, well, he was. He wasn't happy at home, his friends no longer made him happy, and the attention from all the girls was getting old. Time and time again he thought about Andrew and how he had told Steve all these same problems years ago. He wondered if he ever found a way to make it easier when he remembered Kelsey.

He flirted with Nancy more over the next few weeks and then finally asked her out. Steve Harrington was officially off the market and no longer had to deal with all these girls throwing themselves at him. He only had to deal with one.

They did end up sleeping together fairly soon. It was something Steve wanted to avoid but he felt pressure from Tommy and Carol to make that move the night it happened. They were all hanging out at his house so its not like he could of just lied to them about it. He actually feels like an asshole looking back at that night. He took Nancys virginity over peer pressure in a house with his 2 friends in the next room. Honestly the only thing he was worried about at the time was

putting on a performance for her so she had no suspicion he wasn't actually into the moment. He imagined he was fucking Andrew the whole time.

When he thought she was leaving him for Jonathan, he went a little nuts. He slandered her name around town with Tommy and Carol, one way including spray paint. When he found out the truth of what was actually going on between Jonathan and her, he felt like an asshole. After all, everything he did was out of anger towards her for the most selfish reason possible. He was more angry he had chose her to have this relationship front with and he thought she had blew if for him. He felt like a monster.

He dated Nancy all through JR year and in that time he ended his friendship with both Tommy and Carol and retired his King title. It was a title he was thrilled to get rid of. Their relationship ended a couple weeks into his senior year. During the span of their relationship they had only slept together one other time.

Steve was sad when their relationship ended. At this point it wasn't even just about the security it gave him, but because he truly grew to love Nancy as he got to know her. She was the most brave, caring and loving girl he had ever met. He was actually happy she ended up with Jonathan. She deserved someone who looked at her like she hung the stars in the sky.

Senior year was also the year he met Billy Hargrove, the California boy with anger issues. He was the most stubborn, arrogant but beautiful boy Steve ever laid eyes on. He hated him. He was a dick about taking the King title Steve never even wanted, an asshole during basketball, snarky about his break up, a jerk to his little sister.. The dude was a fucking maniac. His fighting dirty at the Byers house just sealed the deal for Steve that there was no way in hell he'd ever like the guy.

Until the Summer of 85'. By this point in his life Steve was done high school and working at an ice cream parlor in the new mall. His best friends consisted of his ex, her new boyfriend and a kid. He definitely peeked in high school and he couldn't enjoy any of it. He tried flirting with girls at work just to feel some sense of self satisfaction but constantly got rejected, which usually followed by his co worker

Robin laughing at him.

His job didn't last long. Not because he was a terrible employee, but because Star Court Mall came to an end. To make a long story short, Billy ended up in the hospital for months from this incident. Now, Steve really didn't want to feel anything but hate towards this guy, but his injuries were that of someone who saved the lives of children and you just can't hate someone who does that.

Steve offered to drive his step sister Max to the hospital every Friday. She was nothing but thankful. He later found out Mr. Hargrove forbid anyone in the house from visiting Billy. Max had been lying about going to some summer AV thing those Fridays to be able to see her brother. This explained why he was picking her up from the school.

When they first seen Billy he looked like a different version of himself. His hair was shorter, the doctor had apparently said it was matted beyond repair and they didn't want him laying on it like that while in his coma. She had overheard Neil tell Susan this after his only visit to the hospital, the day Billy was brought in. Max had admitted to Steve in the car one day she thinks Neil told them to do it since Billy loved his hair.

Their routine continued the same for the first month. Billy was in a coma during this time but the Doctor said all the monitors showed amazing signs for his condition. His body probably just needed to heal was all.

The first Friday they showed up and Billy's eyes were open, Max cried. He couldn't talk to them, probably sore from all the tubes, but he seemed aware of his surroundings. Steve watched as his eyes took in the hospital room around him, probably still not entirely sure what happened to him. It was probably best if he forgot. Steve couldn't help but take in how much Billy reminded him of Andrew like this. Sure it was messed up, the boy was lying in a hospital bed for crying out loud, but it was the first time Steve seen him awake and staying still. He looked gentle like this. His hair actually looked better this length and even with all the trauma he went through, he still had muscle tone in his arms. He was checking him out what the hell was wrong with him. He looked up and he met Billy's eyes— fuck. He was probably too out of it to notice anyway.

Steve and Max continued to visit the hospital on Fridays. Billy was clearly healing as he was starting to act more and more like his old self. He truly seemed to have blocked out everything that he had gone through and neither Max nor Steve thought it'd be wise to jolt that memory back into existence.

Once he was cleared to begin Physical therapy, Steve began visiting the hospital without Max, both on days off and before shifts and his new job at a video rental store. He felt like he owed it to they guy to help him get back to normal. It was weird because at first Billy was ecstatic about his progress. He was back to making comments such as "I could still probably take you in basketball, Harrington." Or "The girls'll be happy to know my dick still works fine." Which admittedly stung a little to hear. The more progress Billy made the more confident he was becoming, until he was told he'd probably be going home in a couple weeks.

"That's great news" Steve smiled at Billy after the nurse spoke. They were in his hospital room watching tv. Steve was now there visiting everyday at this point. Billy didn't speak. "Billy she said you'll be outta here in a few weeks" Steve repeated. He must not of heard her, right? Billy didnt comment on it, in fact he changed the subject entirely, but his whole demeanor changed.

That Friday on their way to the hospital, Steve and Max were talking about Billys discharge. He had obviously told her when Billy was given the news that day and decided to comment on the way he deflated at the information. He could tell max knew why. This is when she was supposed to explain.

"On the way back to the school."

"Max you told me days ago you would tell me today."

"And I will after we see him today."

"I've seen you multiple times since I told you what I knew on Tuesday. Why does what you know have to wait until that specific moment?"

She was quiet for a moment. "I couldn't tell you Tuesday or any other

time because I can't risk anyone overhearing."

"Overhearing? Why's it matter?"

"Because it does."

Ok. He wasn't going to get anywhere with that. "So why not now?"

Max sighed. "Because it's a secret and I don't want you seeing Billy right after I tell you."

"It's not like I'm going to tell him you told me a secret, Max?" Steve commented furrowing his eyebrows.

"Not a secret." Max said sternly. "Billy's secret."

The visit went well. Billy's progress everyday amazes Steve each time. The joy Steve seen in Billy's eyes when he seen Max made Steve smile. Billy tried to hide the fact he liked having her here through rude comments but he knew Max seen through it like he did. Spending so much time with the guy really made Steve feel like he misunderstood him.... Wait no he was definitely a tool before.

On the way to the school to drop Max off for "AV Club" pickup, which Max now had to skip on Fridays since school was back in session, Max spilled the beans to Steve on Billy's secret. His father beat him. Not like with a belt on the ass when he was bad, no, like he beat Billy. Max said half the time Billy didn't do anything and the other half he still didn't deserve what he got. The hospital was his vacation away from all of that.

The day of Billy's discharge Steve decided to go to the hospital. Billy joked up and down the last week his old man probably wouldn't show up to grab him. Due to the information he received from Max, Steve couldn't decipher if Billy was actually joking or not. When he got there he headed to Billy's room. He figured he'd just hang out there until his dad showed up to grab him. There was no harm in that, right?

The door was cracked to his room when he approached. It was odd because usually his door was shut, never cracked. Steve assumed his dad must have come already to pick Billy up but decided to double

check. He drove all the way here after all. He heard voices on the other side of the door before he actually began to push it open. Steve wasn't sure if it was a doctor or nurse or something and decided to give them privacy when he heard a weird noise. He got as close to the door as he could without putting any weight on it.

It was a man speaking. He wasn't yelling but he was definitely speaking flat and stern.

"When you get home Billy you're not off the hook for chores. Chores are a part of being a responsible adult, dont you agree?"

"Yes, sir."

"We're having company over for dinner this weekend. My boss and his wife. Maxine and yourself are expected to be on your best behavior or I swear I'll put you right back in this dump. Understood?"

"Yes, sir"

Definitely not a doctor. All signs point to Billy's dad. He really did sound like an asshole. Steve was thinking back to what Max had told him about Neil when he heard something that stood out. It was more pronounced than whatever else he was just saying. There was no way Steve heard what he just did.

"Faggot." Steve's heart skipped a beat at the word, even without hearing the rest of the sentence. He knew being gay was frowned upon. That's why he has been closeted for so long. The general jokes in school people made were horrible enough but this was his first time hearing an adult use it with such hatred. It took a second for him to remember he was saying it to Billy. He couldn't imagine how it felt to have it directed at you by your own father, gay or not.

"With all due respect, sir" he heard Billy speak up with an emphasis on sir, "How does one speak like a faggot?"

"Well Billy, I'd ask the closest fag I see to explain to me but for some reason they're the one askin' me."

Steve walked away from the door after that. It was hard to listen to

and to be honest he really shouldn't of been anyway. That was big over stepping on his part. It kept playing in his head though. Not because of how horrible it was in particular, though that was the main reason, but sometimes it was in a different way. Sometimes it was the 'what if he really is gay' way. The odds of there being any truth behind Neils words were slim. He was just trying to say things to get to Billy and work him up. A little sliver of Steve dreamed it was true.

Steve did end up asking eventually. It was awkward when he did. He kind of just blurted it out one night when they were hanging out at his house. They hung out pretty often after Billys discharge and sort of became best friends. They had a lot more in common then they knew.

"Billy?"

"Yea" Billy asked sitting next to Steve on his bed. He was going through tapes Steve owned and commenting periodically about things certain tracks made him think of. Steve thought it was cute.

"Are you gay?"

Billy froze. Steve and Billy were the only two at Steves house so its not like he could be scared Steve said it too loud. He seemed to snap out of it just as quick as he went in, but he looked pissed.

"The fuck, Harrington." He narrowed his eyes at Steve. They were only a few feet away and Steve could see him shaking from where he sat.

"Look I wasn't.." Steve ran his hand through his hair. His nervous tick. "I wasn't trying to like.. i dont know.. offend you?"

"You're asking me if I'm a queer and I'm not supposed to get offended?"

"No.. Billy.. Thats—"

Tapes hit the floor as Billy jumped off the bed. He stormed out of the room and moments later the Camaro engine roared to life.

Steve didn't see Billy for two weeks. It felt like the longest two weeks of his life. He didn't realize when it happened but he felt like he was starting to fall for Billy Hargrove. Nobody even knew he was gay, not even Robin who had admitted to him that SHE was gay. He told her that night at work. She hugged him. He told her he was in love with Billy Hargrove. She hugged him tighter.

When he finally seen Billy again it was a week after Steve had come out to Robin. Billy and Max showed up to rent a movie and he asked Steve if they could talk while Max browsed. Said shes keep an eye on Max and told Steve to take a long break if he got caught up. He was happy she was in his life.

Steve followed Billy outside and was surprised when he sat in the Camaro and shut the door. Steve took it as a sign a did the same, climbing in the passenger side. Billy just stared at him. Steve smiled both because he felt happy to see Billy and awkward to just be sitting here. Billy sighed and looked away.

"Can you stop that?" He asked sounding defeated. Steves smiled dropped.

"Stop what?" Steve asked confused.

"That." Billy said half ass moving his hand in small circles in front of Steves face for a moment before dropping his hand to his side once more. He still didnt look at Steve. "Just smiling at me like that with your goofy smile." Steve was kinda hurt by that comment at first but then he seen billy smiling as he pushed his hand through his own hair. "I cant — Steve this is really hard for me."

"Whats going on?"

"I'm gay" he said immediately after. No hesitation at all like if he didn't say it right there he didn't think he would at all. Steve didn't say anything and Billy sat straight looking straight ahead. "Thats why I haven't talked to you." He continued. "You were right."

Steve didn't know what to say at first. He was trying to read the situation so he didn't say the wrong thing. He couldn't say the wrong thing. He figured his best course of action was just a simple "Me too."

Billy finally looked at him and god he looked gorgeous. He parted his lips to say something but stopped himself. Nobody really needed to say anything in this moment.

The first time they kissed was after Billy showed up one night on Steves doorstep. It wasnt too long after they talked in the Camaro. Billys dad had roughed him up and Billy didn't know where else to turn. He handled the pain really well Steve thought as he helped bandage him up. "I hate your dad" Steve muttered.

"Join the club" Billy croaked back. They went upstairs to Steves room to listen to music and try to shift the mood a little. Music usually did the trick. While Steve was grabbing his tapes he could feel eyes on him. When he turned around, Billy was playing with a bandage. When They were looking through the tapes Steve noticed Billy staring from time to time out of the corner of his eye. 'Fuck it' he thought and turned his head to look at Billy. It didnt take long for him to notice.

"What?" Billy asked just before Steve smashed their mouths together. Steve felt Billys mouth move against his and Steve deepened the kiss. It was better then he could've ever imagined. He was 100% sure he was in love with Billy Hargrove.